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Public Information: Virginija Morgan

Email: vmorgan@usaid.gov

<http://centralasia.usaid.gov>

PRESS RELEASE

Journalists Study How to Inform the Society on Tuberculosis Prevention Issues

From June 2-3, 2007 a two-day workshop for mass media representatives was held in Ashgabat to discuss ways to cover TB issues by mass media. The workshop was arranged by the Press Center of the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan (MOHMIT) with the support of Project HOPE and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

At the workshop, journalists discussed ways to raise the awareness among the population on TB prevention within the framework of the National Tuberculosis (TB) Program. The seminar was attended by representatives of a broad range of mass media: national TV Channels, TV-4 informational Channel, radio broadcasters, as well as staff of the central and velayat newspapers and magazines (including women's magazine, popular science medical magazine). Medical specialists also took part in the workshop, including TB Faculty of the Turkmen State Medical Institute and TB Prevention Center specialists.

Participants heard presentations on the National TB Program, implementation of the Directly Observed Short-course Treatment (DOTS) strategy, and the methods of informing society about health care issues. The curriculum also included the journalists' ethics and discussion of publications in local periodicals on tuberculosis.

The organizers hope that by increasing the role of journalists in informing the population about TB prevention and treatment, this workshop will contribute to the efforts to reduce and eliminate this disease in the country.

USAID is a long-term partner to the Government of Turkmenistan in TB prevention and control efforts. Since 1999 USAID and its partner organizations, such as Project HOPE, have been assisting with equipment, medicines, and training for health professionals and laboratory staff, as well as introduction of WHO-recommended treatment for TB in the country. Due to the successes of the TB treatment at the USAID-supported pilots, the Government of Turkmenistan in 2005 approved the National TB Program, which includes countrywide expansion of the TB DOTS treatment.

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